

CPYRIGHT

CPYRIGHT

DONOVAN TO HELP 'HOSTAGES' DEAL

Will Negotiate for Exchange
of People With Soviet

By HOMER BIGART

James E. Donovan, the lawyer who negotiated with the Cuban government for the release of prisoners, said yesterday that he would help negotiate the terms of a proposed agreement for an exchange of "peace hostages" with the Soviet Union.

He said he would go to Geneva next June 22 for a meeting with Russians who have expressed interest in an exchange of "peace supporters." The object of the meeting would be to work out a proposed agreement for a pilot exchange of 30 to 50 persons, including some close relatives of high ranking officials.

The "hostages for peace" idea was conceived by Stephen D. James, an advertising copy writer in the Bronx, who thought it would discourage nuclear powers from starting war and would promote better understanding.

4-Mand Team Set

Mr. James said yesterday that Mr. Donovan and three others would be the "core" of the American negotiating team. The others are the Rev. Robert P. Benson, a son-in-law of Governor Rockefeller, and Profs. J. D. Singer and Anatole Rapoport, of the University of Michigan.

Explaining his willingness to go to Geneva, Mr. Donovan said that the proposed exchange of people between the Soviet Union and the United States might provide a gesture of confidence necessary for warmer relations.

He recalled that last April he took his 18-year-old son, John, with him to Havana despite the shocked protest of a State Department official.

Mr. Donovan said the State Department official remarked, "quite haughtily, that this was the ultimate in gamesmanship." He said he replied: "Yeah, but give me the passports."

The psychology worked, Mr. Donovan said. The presence of the son "made a tremendously favorable impression on [Premier Fidel] Castro, who regarded it as a gesture of confidence

on my part for I was operating without diplomatic status or immunity."

Mr. Donovan said his son went skindiving and spear-fishing with Premier Castro in the Bay of Pigs. Castro explained to the boy how he had set up his troops to defeat the invasion.

"I'm convinced," said Mr. Donovan, "that it was largely because I had brought the boy along that I was able that weekend to persuade Castro to release 35 American prisoners."

Mr. Donovan said he thought the "hostages for peace" plan seemed "impractical at first." But he said he liked the plan's emphasis on human values, and added: "If something constructive comes out it's all to the good."